



Lee Hall Reservoir Fisheries Management Report 2003

This 493-acre reservoir (427 acres accessible for fishing) is owned by the City of Newport News and forms part of the City's water supply network, receiving water from the Chickahominy River and Diascund and Little Creek Reservoirs. The reservoir is located in Newport News Park, which was opened for recreational activities in 1966. With a total area of about 8,000 acres, it is one of the largest municipal parks east of the Mississippi. The park marks the site of a civil war battle, which was fought as part of General McClellan's unsuccessful Peninsula Campaign aimed at capturing Richmond.

The fish population was sampled in May of 2002 using an electrofishing boat. This method of sampling the shoreline relies on using an electric current to stun the fish, which can then be picked up, assessed and released. In addition, gill nets were used in the fall of 2002 to sample that component of the fishery which is more orientated towards deeper water habitats.

The 2002 electrofishing data indicates that the bass population is in fair shape. There was a good proportion of fish over 12" in length and they were in good condition. The largest fish caught during this sampling period was 19" in length and weighed 4 lbs. Bluegill, yellow perch, pumpkinseed, and redear sunfish were abundant, but were generally small in size, although there were some nice yellow perch up to 10" in length.

The gill net data shows that there has been a great improvement in the black crappie and chain pickerel populations in terms of abundance and size structure since the last survey was carried out in 1999. In both cases we captured fish that would qualify for length citations under the Department's Angler Recognition Program (15" minimum for crappie, 24" minimum for pickerel). There were plenty of pickerel in the 16 to 22" size range and good numbers of crappie in the 8 to 12" range. These fish appeared to be in good condition. White perch were also abundant with the largest caught being 10" long. There was no shortage of forage, gizzard shad in the 5 to 8" range were extremely abundant and there were plenty of golden shiners.

Boats can be rented or you can use the boat ramp, which is accessible through Camp Site Drive. A fishing pier and designated shoreline fishing areas are also available. In addition to fishing, the park caters for a variety of activities, which includes golf, archery, hiking and biking. Services include picnic shelters, campsite, arboretum, playgrounds and interpretive center.

The reservoir is open to fishing from sunrise to sunset and is located off Route 143, via the Lee Hall (Route 143) or Fort Eustice Boulevard (Route 105) exits off I-64. Further information about the park can be obtained from the Newport News Department of Parks and Recreation at 757 886 7912 or from their web page www.newport-news.va.us/parks.